

The Other Utah

Nonurban Focus

by Austin Sargent

Poverty is an important issue in Utah. In general, the rate of poverty is typically higher in nonurban Utah than in metropolitan areas. In 1999, according to the Census Bureau, the four metro counties had an individual poverty rate of 8.6 percent, compared to a 12-percent rate in rural Utah.

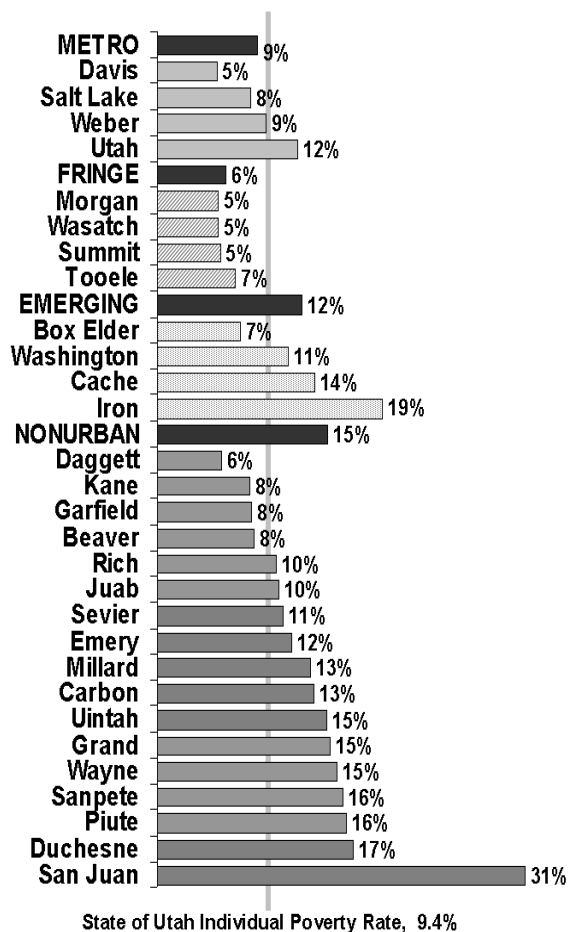
Life on the Fringe

However, a closer look at the data shows that results differ substantially in nonurban areas. The economic structure, location, and size of the non-metro counties significantly affect their poverty rates. The four nonurban counties on the fringe of metro Utah have the lowest rates of poverty in the state at 5.9 percent. These counties are frequently havens for those with higher incomes. Their attraction is primarily due to lower land prices, convenient access to the metro area for work or entertainment, and the "country living" they provide.

On the Bubble

Four nonurban counties, with large growing populations show a 12.4 percent individual poverty rate. Their populations are in excess of 30,000 but fewer than 100,000. One reason for the higher rate of poverty in these counties is due to their demographic

1999 Individual Utah Poverty Rates



Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

composition. Large segments of college-aged and retirement-aged individuals affect the rate of poverty.

Down on the Range

The remaining nonurban counties range in population from under 1,000 to more than 25,000. Most are located in the central and eastern parts of the state. These counties have the highest individual poverty rate at 14.6 percent. The higher poverty rate in these counties is impacted by lower rates of

economic growth. However, location and population characteristics also play a part. One county, San Juan, has the highest individual poverty rate in the state at 31.4 percent, primarily because of poverty on the Navajo reservation.

Undoubtedly, there is more poverty in nonurban Utah than in urban areas. However, even among the rural counties there are significant differences in the level of poverty.

*For more information go the following link:
http://quickfacts.census.gov/cgi-bin/state_QuickLinks?49000*

What's Up?

- ✓ The U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee approved \$4.1 million to expedite the clean-up of the Atlas tailings site in Moab as part of \$47 million in water and energy projects slated for Utah. (*Times-Independent*, 8/1/2002)
- ✓ Utah state agencies and the Navajo Tribe are teaming up to build a \$3.8 million visitor welcome center, amphitheater, and retail village near Highway 163 and Oljato Road. Construction on the project should take a year. (*Salt Lake Tribune*, 9/20/2002)
- ✓ The Steed family has reopened the Utah Forest Products Mill in Escalante, which originally closed in March. Now, 53 employees are back on the job.
- ✓ The company has purchased equipment for a "micro-mill" which is expected to help make the mill more profitable. (*The Spectrum*, 8/13/02)
- ✓ The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has officially designated Eureka as a Superfund site. Clean-up is expected to cost \$51 million and take up to three years. (*Deseret News*, 9/05/02)
- ✓ Aviacode is hoping to get 100 employees through a just-announced "Smart Site" program in Delta and Fillmore. Initial training would focus on medical coding training. The company is ready to hire up to 100 people who can get training and certification. (*Deseret News*, 8/20/02)